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The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program



Dr. Brewitt and family traveled from Salt Lake City to Yellowstone National Park this summer to see the sights.



Volume 9, Issue 2

Yellowstone by Dr. Peter Brewitt



This summer my family and I left my conference in Salt Lake City, drove north four hours, and entered the natural wonderland known as Yellowstone National Park. We had never been there (despite my teaching about it in most of my classes) so it was with great excitement that we rolled into the park and drove through clouds of volcanic steam to our rental cabin.

A little background reminder: Yellowstone is the world's first national park, created in 1872 mostly because of its explosive geology – it sits on top of a supervolcano that expresses itself in geysers, steam vents, prismatic springs, and other dramatic and unearthly features. But while these were awesome, and you should see them if you go, the real highlight was the animals.

The Lamar and Yellowstone Valleys, in the eastern part of the park, are pretty but not physically dramatic – not nearly as eye-catching as the Gallatins or Tetons that rise snowily outside the park. They're the sort of valleys that you can find all over North America, covered by wheat or clipped into fairways. But since they're protected, instead of tractors or golf carts they are

full of bison, antelopes, elk, moose, bears, wolves, and all the other animals you might imagine when you think of the West. We saw all of these, getting into a traffic jam at one point as a herd of probably 200 bison splashed up out of the river in front of our car – just thousand-pound beasts, rolling across the road with their little latte-colored calves trotting to keep up. We watched as two wolves tried to kill a baby antelope, with the mother antelope doing her best to chase them off (she was successful).

It was amazing, and I'll remember it till the day I die, but I kept thinking that all of this was ordinary life to these creatures, and would have, 150 or 200 years ago, been commonplace all over America. Not so long ago there were tens of millions of bison, from South Carolina to Alaska, and wolves were the most widespread animal in the northern hemisphere. Our ancestors would have laughed at us jumping out of the car and scrambling for our binoculars to see wolves or snapping photos of bison. What we preserved then, what we treasure now, is, over the long term, an ordinary place.



Upcoming Events and Opportunities

September 15th

7:30am-12:00pm

Lake Bowen Warden's
Office

Spartanburg Water Lake Sweep: Help keep our watershed clean! Meet at the Lake Bowen Wardens' Office – registration and breakfast at 7:30am - Buses leaving promptly at 8:00am. Put together your team of 5 and register at <https://www.spartanburgwater.org/spartanburg-events/99/2018+Lake+Sweep> Lunch provided and a free t-shirt! Contact jonmorgan@spartanburgwater.org with questions.

Week of September 17th

Free Books Available: Come by the ENVIS office to check out the boxes of books! Professor Lane will leave the books out for a week to see if anyone is interested before donating them to the local library.

September 18th

7:00pm

Gray-Jones Room,
Burwell Building

Long Term Environmental Reflection, Arts and Humanities: The View from Shaver's Creek: A talk by David Taylor, Assistant Professor of Sustainability at Stony Brook University, and Mike Branch, Professor of English and Environmental Literature at University of Nevada-Reno about the new Wofford Long Term Environmental Reflection program (LTER) and the Shaver's Creek LTER anthology.

September 21st -22nd

8:00am-3:00pm

199 Gowens Road,
29306

Recycle Spartanburg's Community Clean-Up Event: Open to all Spartanburg County residents. Bring unwanted items including construction & demolition debris, furniture, yard debris, metal, appliances, electronics, and tires (*limit 5 per household*). For more information, please call (864) 949-1658.

September 27th

5:00pm

Morningside Baptist
Church, 897 S. Pine
Street, 29302

Public Meeting with AECOM and SCDOT: AECOM is working on behalf of SC Department of Transportation to make improvements to the Country Club Road corridor between Union Street and Clifton Glendale Road (3.3 miles). They will hold a public meeting to give residents and the community an opportunity to comment on the proposed improvements.

PROFILE OF THE WEEK:

George Washington University – Geography Master's Program

George Washington University's Columbian College of Arts and Sciences offers a two-year Master of Science in Geography. Along with four core areas of focus in Urban Environments, Development and Sustainability, Human Migration and Mobility, and Applied Geospatial Techniques, the program encourages students to take related courses outside of the department and has access to associated courses at other Washington, DC area universities.

Another advantage to being in the Washington, DC

area is that students are in close proximity to governmental agencies and other environmental groups that provide internships and valuable experiences.

Small class sizes with a faculty-to-student ratio of 1:2 provide students with careful mentoring and there are teaching and research assistantships available on a competitive basis.

[George Washington University – Department of Geography](#)